

Nicolas RUTH

University of Wuerzburg. Germany. nicolas.ruth@uni-wuerzburg.de

Benedikt SPANGARDT

University of Wuerzburg. Germany. benedikt.spangardt@uni-wuerzburg.de

Research trends on music and advertising

Tendencias de la investigación en música y publicidad

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Abstract

Research on music and advertising is diverse and unstructured. Looking at the most important factors that define related research, this article aims to introduce a typology of four research fields that reflect the interplay of the complex relationship between music and advertising. An analysis of relevant studies revealed diverse research gaps and clustered the main research traditions. Eventually, we identified four types of research, namely advertising with music, advertising with musicians, music with advertising, and advertising for music. This typology leads to the conclusion that more interdisciplinary research is needed for the investigation all of the boundaries between music and advertising.

Resumen

La investigación sobre música y publicidad es diversa y poco estructurada, pero en este artículo argumentamos que existen cuatro campos de investigación que reflejan la interacción de la compleja relación entre la música y la publicidad. Un análisis de los estudios pertinentes reveló diversas brechas de investigación y agrupó las principales tradiciones de investigación. Finalmente, identificamos cuatro tipos de investigación: publicidad con música, publicidad con músicos, música con publicidad y publicidad para música. Esta tipología conduce a la conclusión de que se necesita más investigación interdisciplinaria para la investigación de todos los límites entre la música y la publicidad.

Keywords

Commercials; brands; sponsoring; product placements; music industry

Palabras clave

Anuncios; marcas; patrocinadores; establecimiento de productos; industria musical

1. Introduction

The music business and the advertising industry have much in common. Wang (2014) argues that the music and advertising industries are parts of the larger systems "economy" and "media": both industries use the "media" system to gain publicity and require money thus relying on the "economy" system. Furthermore, both industries interact with each other and influence each other in terms of trends, business strategies, and joint ventures (for a detailed historical overview, see Taylor, 2012). This article focuses on showing and organizing the complex network of relationships between these two industries.

In our days of omnipresent media it is increasingly difficult to follow all of the trends that define music and advertising; therefore, we believe it is necessary to develop a typology for researchers and practitioners. This article will introduce a typology that illustrates how music and advertising are related to each other, how they influence each other, and how research was conducted or should be conducted to investigate each of the four sections of the typology. We will provide illustrative examples from professional practice and research.

This article will not discuss manifestations of the interactions on a systemic or macro level but will show concrete forms of the interplay between two media phenomenon and how they are received by music listeners or advertising recipients. The typology will help researchers from media and communication sciences, musicology, cultural sciences and related disciplines to get a comprehensive and structured overview of the research field. In addition, we will point our gaps in the existing literature that can be addressed by interested researchers.

2. Approaching a typology

Music and advertising appear together in numerous and multifarious formats that are rarely distinct; therefore, a summary and classification seems reasonable. Investigating the overlaps between music and advertising does not need to be problematic and may highlight interesting areas of enquiry for researchers in both fields.

First of all, we focused on the main themes of existing research and identified major factors that usually interact with each other as displayed by current research (for an overview of the music and advertising research from 1966 to 2008, see Graakjær & Janzén, 2009). Second, we wanted to narrow down those factors to as few factors as possible by taking the chances that the categories are broader than, for example, those introduced by Graakjær (2009), but to facilitate factors that have fluid boundaries and many interplays with each other. Third, the factors should enable us to draw categories for a typology.

The three acquired factors that define our proposed categories are advertising, music (including all music products such as songs, albums and music videos), and advertising musicians. Following the definition by Siegert and Brecheis (2010: 28) in this article advertising is defined as a planned communication process that intends to influence knowledge, opinions, attitudes and/or behavior over and towards products, services, companies, brands or ideas. Advertising makes use of specialized materials and is supported by particular media, e.g. mass media and other channels. Advertising musicians are musicians, and in some cases the involved labels or publishers, that actively advertise products in commercial ways.

Research about music and advertising usually investigates the interaction of at least two or all three of the identified factors which leads us to four categories that describe the interplay between music and advertising with the discernible goal to persuade recipients:

1. Advertising with music
2. Advertising with musicians
3. Music with advertising
4. Advertising for music

A model was designed to illustrate interactions between music, advertising, and advertising musicians (see Figure 1). In the following chapters these four categories will be described in detail with reference to corresponding research and identification of current gaps in the literature.

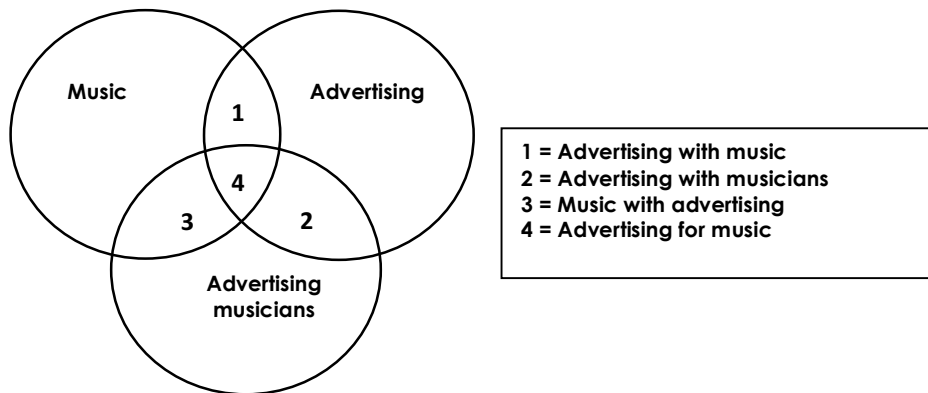


Figure 1: Interaction model of music, advertising, and advertising musicians

2.1. Advertising with music

The first and maybe most obvious interaction between music and advertising shall be called *advertising with music*. This is presented as the first category because it is currently the most common research field to be discussed by scholars. When someone writes about music and advertising they usually refer to music in adverts. Music transports, underlines or amplifies the persuasive message of adverts (Gleich, 2015; Schramm & Spangardt, 2016). Most advertising professionals feel obliged to use music in auditory or audio-visual medias: 65% of all TV commercials and even 70% of all radio commercials of the 1970s and early 1980s in Germany contained music (Rösing, 1981), while Leo (1999) reported that 85% of German TV commercials used music, and Allan (2008) showed that US American TV commercials incorporated music in nearly 94% of all spots. Following these results, a chronological progress can be seen and it is arguable that rates have increased in recent years.

North et al. (2004: 1675) state that "billions of dollars" are spent worldwide for music in advertising; however, the development and importance of research on this subject are not proportional to this. Music is used in various ways in advertising but no one can reliably predict the effects of music on the recipients of advertisements. Advertising professionals often rely on their gut instinct and refer to simple rules and experience like the incorporated music should be liked, should fit the target group or should activate the listeners (Tauchnitz, 1993). Following the paradigm by Huron (1989) music in advertising can contribute to the effectiveness of an advertisement in six ways: entertainment, structure, memorability, lyrical language, targeting and authority establishment.

Expectations concerning the effects of advertising music are often based on hands-on experience rather than empirical findings (Schramm & Spangardt, 2016). This does not mean that empirical insights do not exist. In recent decades various music-related factors have been investigated regarding their effectiveness in advertising. Only a cursory research review can be provided but some research streams should be highlighted. Researchers most commonly investigate whether music affects recipients' recall performance or perception of a product. In most studies recipients' perception and recall of the products are tested by comparing groups that watched commercials with or without music. Results generally indicate that music improves recipients' perception and recall (Tauchnitz, 1990; Wallace, 1991; Wallace, 1994; Yalch, 1991).

The broad agreement is that music and advertisement have to be congruent: i.e. music should fit the advertised product or brand in order to positively affect attitude, recall, and eventually purchase intention (e.g. Kellaris et al., 1993; North et al., 2004; MacInnis & Park, 1991). Shen and Chen (2006) demonstrated that incongruence not only inhibits the effect but even leads to a negative effect. This congruence or "musical fit", as it is typically called, with the advertisement is usually achieved when recipients perceive the music as appropriate in the context of the advertisement (North et al. 2014; Spangardt & Schramm, 2016).

If the music in an advert is liked by the listener it will generally be evaluated more positively than if they do not like the music (Galan, 2009). In regard to musical styles or genres researchers have not found any factors that decrease or increase the attitude towards the advertisement or recall of the product or brand. But the genre significantly influences a recipient's impressions of the promoted product (Zander et al., 2010; Zander, 2006) and the perceived mood (for example happy versus sad) of the applied music has an impact on

certain variables like purchase intentions (Alpert et al., 2005). The effects of musical characteristics (for example, tempo, loudness, or mode) were examined in various studies but results were often contradictory (for an overview of the results see Schramm & Spangardt, 2016).

The small amount of existing research identified above supports our assertion that it is not yet possible to refer to consistent and systematic research in the area of advertising. There is a lack of up-to-date empirical knowledge about the use of music in advertising, the general frequency of music in advertising on TV, radio and the world wide web, the use of various types of advertising music, or the use of stylistic components. There is also a lack of systematic, reliable, and theoretically sound insights that demonstrate and characterize the effect of music in advertising and thereby provide a basis for the transfer of knowledge to the professional practice of the advertising industry. Furthermore, research should seek to gain insight into production processes. Research in this field could facilitate a fruitful collaboration between music and advertising practitioners. From an economical perspective, insights into the function of music-containing advertising in the economic value chain would be interesting. Some key questions could be:

- How does advertising industry benefit from the music?
- Is this benefit to be quantified?
- And if so, is it worth the investment?
- Is the suspected effect of the music evaluated by the advertising professionals?

2.2. Advertising with musicians

The second category is called *advertising with musicians* and refers to the testimonial strategy. Using testimonials for commercial purposes is one of the most common strategies in advertising (Martin et al., 2008). This is especially relevant for the deployment of famous testimonials. Researchers have demonstrated that famous testimonials lead to a positive attitude of recipients towards the brand and eventually to a higher purchase intention (Amos et al., 2008; Eisend & Langner, 2010). It is possible that musicians act as testimonials in which case they become carrier and mediator of the advertising content and also advertising content themselves. Prominent and successful artists are most commonly chosen as testimonials and very prominent celebrities tend to advertise for several brands or products from various branches in different countries (for detailed analyses of commercials with musicians, see Klein, 2009). This is nothing new for athletes but there are now many musicians that have advertising deals with several companies – for example, Taylor Swift signed a deal with the soda *Diet Coke* in addition to her testimonial work for *Target*, *Sony* and *Walmart* (Barker, 2013).

The assumed effect of using celebrities in advertising is the transfer of a positive image from the celebrity to the brand or product (Malik & Sudhakar, 2014; Miller & Allan, 2001). Musicians, just like prominent sportsmen- and women, sometimes sign endorsement deals which can be considered as a special case of testimonial advertising. In contrast to a classic testimonial commercial, which could be for a product that is not connected at all to the musician (for example cars or cereals), an endorsement fits the profession of the celebrity. In the case of musicians this could be music specific products (e.g. headphones or sound system) or equipment (e.g. amplifiers or instruments). When it comes to endorsement deals the celebrities not only transfer their image, but act as experts for the products and can offer recommendations. From research with sportsmen- and women, we know that testimonials that are attributed with expertise are better endorsers than others (Shuart, 2007). The underlying process can be described as the desire of the recipients to be as successful as the celebrities. The endorsed product suggests that anyone can be as successful when using this product. A "fan" component might also play a part in how endorsements work: the customer can feel closer to his or her star when the product is bought, because the star (allegedly) uses this product. For example, Eric Clapton is endorser for the guitar manufacturer *Fender* and uses *Fender* products in advertisements.

Research on testimonials in advertising is easily accessible. In most cases, contributions to research are made for athletes (Doyle et al., 2014; Schaaf, 2011) or celebrities in general (Malik & Sudhakar, 2014). In some cases, musicians are included in research but only mentioned on the edge subsumed under the label "entertainer" (Yannopoulos, 2012). Therefore, the specific characteristics of the music industry and personalities from this system are not taken into account in research on testimonials in advertising. To date, reviews of the appearance of prominent musicians in the advertising sector or analyses of which products they stand for - as there is for the sports context (Schaaf, 2011) – are completely missing. This is why comparing research on the use of musicians as testimonials with various music related and non-music related brands is missing, although it would be interesting to investigate how the different non-music brands could profit from music testimonials and the other way round: A music star who is a testimonial for s specific

product could gain prominence or even popularity with enough advertising pressure, because people who are not interested in music could be exposed to the artist for the first time. This is an example of where this category overlaps with the category *advertising for music* (see section 2.4).

2.3. Music with advertising

The third type of interaction, this time between music and advertising musicians, is *music with advertising*: i.e. music that includes advertising. In other words, this category is about placing brands or products in song lyrics or other music products like music videos. The advertising industry usually tags this as product placement or brand placement and it can occur in all media types (Karrh et al., 2003; Storm & Stoller, 2015; Sung & De Gregorio, 2008). Depending on the context different effects can evolve (Rathmann, 2014) so it is worth taking a look at product or brand placements in music.

Placements like sound logos could be incorporated in the music and should be considered when analyzing music in mass media (Tagg & Clarida, 2004). But in our understanding, placements are not presented in the sonorous music itself, but they appear as so-called "verbal placements" in the lyrics. The use in music videos is further away from the actual song, but also possible and common (see Schemer et al., 2008). A problem with identifying product placements in the music context is that it is not always possible to determine whether a brand or a company paid for the placement of a particular product or if placing a product was part of the musician's creative process. It is well known that companies pay for product or brand placements in songs (van Buskirk, 2008) but it can be difficult to distinguish between deliberate placements and unpaid mentioning (for example of the artist's favorite car or alcohol) without knowing the background of an advertising deal (Kaufman, 2003). As far as we can tell, the distinction between paid and unpaid placements does not influence the impact of the advertising on recipients.

Some researchers have investigated the use of placements in the music context. Ferguson and Burkhalter (2015) showed that placements are accepted in the context of hip-hop and rap music and the corresponding (presumably brand-specific) cultures and are also accepted by the audience. Actually, in this genre context, obviously placed brands and products are particularly easy to find. A fairly prominent example for this are the lyrics by rapper Sean Combs (better known as Diddy, P. Diddy or Puff Daddy) and his collaboration with the vodka brand *Ciroc* that belongs to the liquor company *Diageo*. This particular vodka is often mentioned in his song lyrics (e.g. Diddy – "We dem Boys", French Montana feat. Diddy – "Worst nightmare" or Rick Ross feat. French Montana produced by Diddy – "Nobody"). This is not surprising since Combs is the brand ambassador for *Ciroc* and is an investor and shareholder of *Diageo* (Kuron, 2015).

There are a number of factors that differentiate the perception and corresponding effects of product placement in music contexts from other media contexts (Schemer et al., 2008). It has been shown in the context of film and television that the effect of a placement depends on a variety of factors, such as whether a character interacts with the product, whether the product is shown or not, how often it is shown, whether it occurs in a positive or negative context and many others (see Schallhorn et al., 2014). Here, a transfer to music could be made easily, because music products offer numerous conceivable contexts for product and brand placements. Product placements in films are more likely to be recognized by audiences when compared to product placements in song lyrics. Also, as far as the perception is concerned, a wide field opens up here: While a product can easily (but not always) be recognized in music videos like it is true for films and series, this is not necessarily the case in song lyrics. If lyrics are not presented in the recipient's mother tongue it may be hard for them to comprehend quickly or indistinctly presented products. Sometimes listeners will not notice that they have heard a product placement, perhaps because the product was previously unknown and information is missing that makes it identifiable (such as an associated visual stimulus).

Further research on the audience's use, perception, and acceptance of placements would be desirable. Thus, it is conceivable that certain products (for example, those that are not morally approved, see Gupta & Gould, 1997) will not be accepted and could cause negative impressions that will be associated with the advertising musician; there is further need for investigations in the area of intended and actual effects.

In earlier days, product placements would involve occasional compensation or exchange transactions to reduce production costs. Today we face integrated promotional campaigns worth millions of dollars. For this reason alone, researchers should be interested in the costs of the advertising industry and the corresponding revenues for the music industry. Further insights into the economic background of such placements are also missing. Therefore, musicians should be interviewed to gain insights into the intentions or coincidences of placements in lyrics; results will probably differ according to the musician's genre. Aside from the economic aspects, it may be interesting to investigate legal and ethical conditions, backgrounds,

and perspectives; for example, the placement of alcohol or tobacco products in songs that are mainly listened to by children and adolescents.

2.4. Advertising for music

The fourth and final category of our typology is called *advertising for music*. Attentive observers recognize that the music industry is adopting the logics of advertising as its own and the two systems are constantly observing each other and taking over the strategies and logics of each other (Wang, 2014). This means that the music industry uses advertising to create attention and publicity for its products. Products of the music industry and advertising musicians, e.g. concerts, then become the content of advertising.

Responsibility for the advertising of music products usually lies with the product managers of music companies, who either dedicate themselves to the marketing of new productions or existing catalog products. In addition to traditional advertising for television, radio and print advertising, the marketing mix of the music industry is increasingly influenced by new ways of communication, while promotion via posters and billboards is of constant importance for the live music sector (see Mahlmann, 2009). Today, of course, this goes beyond announcements via advertisements and posters; the creativity of the advertising music industry is hardly limited: for example, music promotion through social media channels, advertising in other media formats, and the viral distribution of music, are essential for the music industry. Artists like PSY and Walk off the Earth have benefited from this type of advertising in recent years. The music industry was quicker than many other industries to integrate communication channels such as social networks, videos and electronic press kits (EPK) into their marketing strategies. A special feature of music in mass media is that it is commonly content and advertising object at the same time; here, the boundaries of free promotion and paid advertising disappear.

A paradigm shift has taken place recently in the music industry (Tschmuck, 2009). More and more participants in the target market, which are not necessarily from the music industry (e.g. Amazon, Apple or YouTube), confront the music industry with new tasks and challenges. That is why established companies such as Warner Music Group now represent themselves not only as a recording company, but as a comprehensive enterprise of the entertainment industry: they have marked this clearly with a new name *Warner Music Entertainment*. Economically, this awareness can be seen in new fields of work and new distribution channels. Music companies increasingly understand themselves as a 360° management of musicians and are participating in new areas such as booking, merchandising and artist management, which were previously tasks of external agencies (see Engh, 2009). Music distribution, and thus the advertising of music products, not only promotes classical music products anymore, but also music services like playlists, compilations, or exclusive features. New offers are created and advertised, which are especially designed for streaming services (see Huber, 2009). Cooperation, exclusive and prerelease offers for external services can be subsumed in this category. A good example for a successful marketing cooperation in Germany is the one between the music streaming service *Spotify* and the mobile service provider *Deutsche Telekom*. *Spotify* is also a good example for exclusive deals: for example, in 2014 they offered the complete catalogue of the German band Rammstein solely for their users.

In cooperation with other media systems, the peculiarity that music is both media content and advertised product is exploited and marketed in holistic media offerings. There have been various examples of television shows that feature music as content. Chart shows such as *Hit Giganten* in Germany or *Top of the Pops* in Great Britain focused on music as the main content of the show. More recently, commercial music talent shows produced collaboratively by broadcasting companies and major music labels – for example *The Voice*, *X-Factor*, and *Pop Idol* – have featured music as content alongside focus on the competition and competitors' personal stories. Many of the songs that are featured in these shows are cover versions and become successful single releases again due to the shows (Schramm & Ruth, 2014; for the use of cover versions in talent shows, see Pendzich, 2005). In successful seasons of formats new musicians are found and established (like the broadcast companies usually emphasize) and episodes are used as platforms for established musicians and music products. Guest performances for musicians and bands are offered as a platform to promote new publications or concerts. The voting system usually includes paid downloads of songs as votes, which means the songs not only get promoted but also bring their first salary immediately after the release of the show. Compilations are used to advertise music products that are originally from the show. Song selections of the participants are used to promote current music pieces or songs from the catalog of established musicians (these usually come from the catalog of the music company that produces the program). And finally, the members of the jury are staged and their latest productions or tours are promoted accordingly (Schramm & Ruth, 2014).

Content that circulates virally is becoming more and more relevant for musicians. When music is used in a viral video or the music video itself goes viral, the music and artist gain prominence and ensure that the

music product is promoted constantly or at least stays present for a long time. Again, there are many overlaps to other proposed categories, like *advertising with musicians*. An interesting example from Germany is the commercial song for the supermarket chain EDEKA sung by Friedrich Liechtenstein. The song already existed before and was no success until its lyrics were rewritten, now referring to products from EDEKA, and used in a commercial for the supermarket. The video was a huge success and was spread widely through the internet. Afterwards the music and Liechtenstein earned a lot of attention and the song became a must-have due to enormous advertising pressure (see Zurstiege, 2015). A more international example would be the song "Are You Gonna Be My Girl" by Jet that originally was a successful song but became much more prominent when it was used in the appealing TV commercial by Apple in which the company advertised iPhones and iPods by presenting dancing silhouettes that used their products. Music promotion becomes especially effective when the song is mentioned in the commercial for example with a caption. This placement of music is not limited to viral videos but to any media content in television or cinema.

Advertising for music is the most comprehensive category in our typology, but it is also very underrepresented in research. The existing literature is usually written from an economic, descriptive perspective (for example, Clement et al., 2008; Gensch et al., 2009). Music products or brands (including bands and musicians) are rarely the object of investigation in persuasive communication research. The dual presentation of music as a program and advertising object makes research into the perception of the special forms of advertising both exciting and challenging.

In the present typology this category has the most overlaps with other proposed categories. This contributes to the fact that this field is still poorly investigated. Exciting and profitable approaches could include examining the extent to which recipients are able to identify different television formats that contain music as a central content as advertising platforms. It would be interesting to know to what extent music and music companies are perceived as brands; there are some examples that seem to exhibit brand awareness including the indie labels *Sub Pop* or *XL*. There is also little research on reactions to and purchase intentions of music products placed in films, broadcasts, or advertisements.

3. Outlook

The typology described in this article is not exhaustive and perhaps it is somewhat striking and simplistic. It also includes many overlaps; however, it fulfills its initial purpose of arranging the research field. It also provides an overview of the various appearances of the interplay of music and advertising and, above all, the systematic identification of research gaps and approaches. Further types of interplay may be conceivable; however, it should be acknowledged that only the micro level of communication from communicator to recipient has entered this typology. The extent to which such a classification can be applied to other levels in an analogous manner should be subject of further discussion.

From a systematic viewpoint of the music industry the classification proposed here and the fields indicated are particularly relevant because they can be regarded as areas that create value for the music industry. Even if major labels and publishers already take into account all of these fields in their work, the present structuring provides an approach to the creation of value for young and independent music companies, such as indie labels, bookers, or artist managers. Therefore, the practical relevance of the fields indicated should not be underestimated. Apart from traditional music distribution (some parts are described above in the category *advertising for music*), the marketing of the produced music in the advertising sector is a lucrative source of revenue (see *advertising with music*) in a business-to-business context, both through short-term buy-outs as well as through longer-term revenues over license fees. Famous musicians' participation in the advertising industry benefits the music industry as a whole as their music companies are likely to profit financially due to clauses in the musicians' record deals. The still evolving field of *music with advertising* is certainly not appropriate for every genre, as the authenticity of the musicians can often suffer from conspicuous product placements, especially for rock music. Nevertheless, the music industry already uses this approach in many different types of music products, such as music videos, concerts or social network appearances.

It seems desirable that diverse scientific communities should take on the research questions relating to music and advertising outlined in this article. Results from such research could be relevant for scholars as well as for advertising and music professionals. Taking into account that research in this field will be interdisciplinary, we would like to emphasize that cooperation between different scientific areas should be encouraged. Communication scholars or musicologists should remain aware of cultural or economic perspectives and vice versa in order to produce reliable and creative explanations for the reception processes at the point of intersection between music and advertising. These insights should be both theoretical and empirical. In our opinion, the major problem so far is that research only takes place in

isolated spaces. Only small parts get examined that are not correlated to broader concepts or theories. Theoretical concepts like musical fit (see section 2.1) are seldom found and rarely cited by scholars that are not connected to musicology. Following the approach of Bode (2009), scholars should always take into account the context of the music that it appears in. This means not only a musicologist's but also an economic, cultural and practitioner's perspective could be fruitful for research in this field. It is not common to come across continuous studies, replications or discussions on ongoing research. Results of empirical studies are generally left to stand for themselves and are not compared or correlated with other research. It is hoped that different disciplines and dedicated scholars can use the current typology to work together and enable everyone to see the bigger picture.

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